JUSTICE LEAGUE

TASK FORCE™

32 FEB 96

IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU--

--DIE!

BATISTA / WILLIAMSWIRTH

PRIEST
ROBINSON
STEGBAUER

HOUR FORTY-NINE OF THE TASK FORCE'S 57-HOUR JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE...

NO!

THIS IS MYSTEK.

HE'S A LITTLE CLAUSTROPHOBIC.

A HALF SECOND AGO, THE TASK FORCE WAS ASLEEP.

A HIGH INTENSITY DISCHARGE OF ELASTIC PROACTIVE MATTER MAKES ONE HELL OF A WAKE UP CALL.

CHRIST--MYSTEK--!!

TRIUMPH --!!

I'M ON IT--

THE HULL HAS BEEN BREACHED--

FWWOOOMM!

--EVERYONE SECURE YOURSELF TO THE SHIP--

I'VE GOT THE KID.

N--NOOO!! LET ME OUT!!

--OUUUTTT--!!

EASY, MYSTEK--CALM DOWN--

WHAAM!

J'ONN--!!

J'ONN--!!

J'ONN--
PLEASE--

--J'ONN!!

GYPSY--

--OUT--
OUT--

--OUUUUTTTT--!!!

J'ONN--!!

NO... NOT
AGAIN...!

...NO!!

THIS IS *NOT*
HAPPENING--
THIS IS *NOT*--

LEMME GO--!! LEMME GOOOO--!!

NNGGHHHHAAHH--!!

LOST OUR GRAVITY-- THE SHIP'S REACTOR CORE'S GONE OFF LINE. IN FOUR SECONDS I'LL LOSE MY POWERS.

IN EIGHT SECONDS I'LL BE PARALYZED.

SIX SECONDS AFTER THAT, I'LL BE DEAD.

DEAD.

NEVER... CONSIDERED THAT...

NO JUICE--

--CAN'T SNAG MYSTEK WITH A FORCE BOLT--

"--AND CAN'T HELP GYPSY."

NOBODY'S COMING.

NOW THERE'S A SHOCK.

THIS COULD BE ANOTHER OF J'ONN'S FAMOUS FLAKE-OUT DEALS--WHERE HE SITS EVALUATING MY PERFORMANCE--

--WHILE MY HEAD SWELLS UP LIKE A MELON--

OUT-- GOTTA GET OUT--!!

--NEED AIR--!!

PPPAAKKKTT

NO. THIS *ISN'T* HAPPENING.

--THE *SHIP*-- STILL MOVING FASTER THAN *LIGHT SPEED.*

WE'RE BEING CARRIED ALONG BY *INERTIA*--DRAGGED IN THE SHIP'S *WAKE*--

--GUESS THAT'S WHY I'M NOT *DEAD*-- AT THE SPEED WE'RE DRIFTING, TIME IS SLOWED. INSTEAD OF *FREEZING* IN SIX SECONDS, I MAY HAVE AS MANY AS *TWELVE.*

TWELVE SECONDS, J'ONN.

I *NEED* YOU NOW.

J'ONN--?

J'ONN!!!

Oh GOD... MY GOD...

...NOT AGAIN...

TRIUMPH-- HAVE YOU FOUND IT YET?

DEAD... DEAD... DEAD...

TRIUMPH.

IF YOU DO NOT ACTIVATE THE EMERGENCY POWER--CURE THE REACTOR CORE--

--I'M TRYING... J'ONN...

--WE WILL ALL DIE.

...DEAD... DIE... DEAD...

TRIUMPH.

WAIT-- I THINK-- I THINK I'VE *FOUND* IT.

--UGGHNN--!!

WE GOT GRAVITY.

GO AFTER GYPSY. TAKE LIFE MASKS.

CAN'T.

YOU MUST.

I'LL DIE.

THEN YOU DIE.

OH GOD... SO ASHAMED...

TRIUMPH.

...SCARED...

I'M COMING TO THE SHIP. ONLY YOU CAN SAVE GYPSY.

ME--? BUT YOU'RE CLOSER TO--

TRIUMPH-- YOU MUST.

I CAN'T.

VERY WELL--

--THEN GYPSY DIES.

ON MY WAY, J'ONN.

EXCELLENT. I KNEW YOU WOULD COME THROUGH, WILL.

YEAH, WELL, THAT MAKES *ONE* OF US.

ALMOST OPENED IT... ALMOST...

HANDS SHAKING-- STOMACH IN *KNOTS*-- PRAYING MY *FORCE FIELD* HOLDS--

--I WAS GOING TO-- JUST LET HER *DIE*--

--THIS WOMAN WHO MEANS THE *WORLD* TO ME. LIKE A *SISTER* I NEVER HAD--OR *DESERVED*...

FUNNY HOW I TOOK OUR SAFETY FOR GRANTED. NEVER THOUGHT WE'D ACTUALLY *DIE*.

WELL, THE *HELL* WITH NERON'S BOX. IF WE DIE--

--WE DIE *TOGETHER*.

GOD--IT'S BEAUTIFUL OUT HERE. NEVER BELIEVED-- NEVER DARED *DREAM*-- I'D EVER BE FLYING THROUGH *SPACE*.

NOW THAT I'VE GOT THE SHIP'S REACTOR CORE BACK, MY ABILITY TO CREATE *MAGNETIC FIELDS* ENABLES ME TO "*PUSH*" AGAINST THE CORE--CREATING *THRUST*. PROBLEM IS--

--EACH TENTH OF A SECOND, THE SHIP'S INERTIA PULLS IT *MILES* AWAY FROM US--CUTTING MY POWER SOURCE IN *THIRDS* EVERY FEW SECONDS.

MY FORCE FIELD IS DOWN TO TISSUE PAPER *NOW*.

IN OTHER WORDS, I MAY REACH GYPSY JUST IN TIME FOR *BOTH* OF US TO DIE.

LEAN INTO THE CURVE--LET MY MOMENTUM WORK FOR ME--

--SO *DARK* OUT HERE-- GOTTA ALLOW FOR HER INERTIA AND *DRIFT*--LOOK FOR GYPSY WHERE SHE *SHOULD* BE--

--KNOWING IF I GUESS *WRONG*--

FOUND HER!!

J'ONN SOMEHOW MANAGED TO PUSH HER *OUT* OF THE SHIP'S BACKWASH--MADE HER *MUCH* EASIER TO *FIND*--

THESE *UNIFORMS* J'ONN GAVE US ARE CONSTRUCTED OF MARTIAN TECHNOLOGY. THEY PROVIDE *SUPERIOR* INSULATION FROM THE ELEMENTS--

--BUT I DOUBT J'ONN DESIGNED THEM FOR *THIS*.

STILL, WITHOUT THE UNIFORM--SHE'D BE *DEAD*.

C'MON BACK GYPSY... C'MON...

:COUGH: :COUGH: :ACCKKK: --!!

W-WILL--?

THAT'S ME, BABE.

--BUT I CAN *HEAR* YOU--

COMM SYSTEM IN THE LIFE MASK.

THE *WHAT* MASK--?

LATER, SAVE YOUR ENERGY.

Oh GOD I'M COLD--!!

YEAH, BUT YOU'RE *NOT DEAD*. NOT *YET* ANYWAY.

THE SHIP-- WILL, FLY US BACK TO THE *SHIP*--!

CAN'T. I'M *WAY* OUT OF RANGE OF THE SHIP'S REACTOR. MY POWERS NEED A *MAGNETIC FIELD SOURCE*.

I'M *DEAD* IN THE WATER--

"--IT'S ALL UP TO J'ONN NOW."

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A FIELD TRIP.

A SHORT JAUNT ACROSS THE GALAXY TO SHOW SOLIDARITY FOR A TASK FORCE MEMBER.

NOW IT'S A MESS.

THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FLY THE SHIP. HAD HE NOT BROKEN OFF FROM GYPSY, THE VESSEL WOULD'VE BEEN FAR BEYOND HIS RANGE BY NOW.

UNABLE TO MATCH THE SHIP'S SPEED, THE MANHUNTER HAS ANCHORED HIMSELF TO IT WITH A TELEKINETIC "GRIP." HE ALLOWS HIMSELF TO BE PULLED ALONG WITH ITS INERTIA--

--UNTIL HE IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO BOARD.

THE EXPERIENCE IS NOT UNLIKE BEING DRAGGED BEHIND WILD STALLIONS.

IT WILL TAKE LONG SECONDS FOR THE MANHUNTER TO OVERRIDE THE SHIP'S AUTOMATIC CONTROLS.

IT WILL TAKE EVEN LONGER TO PLOT AN INTERCEPT COURSE BACK TO WHERE HIS STUDENTS SHOULD BE.

HE ACCEPTS TWO POSSIBILITIES.

HIS STUDENTS ARE DEAD.

HIS STUDENTS ARE DYING.

HEY, BABE.

WELCOME BACK.

WE-- WE *MADE* IT--?

LOOKS THAT WAY.

YOU--GAVE YOUR LIFE--TO SAVE MINE.

HEY. IT WAS A WALK. J'ONN TURNED THE SHIP JUST IN--

THE *HELL* WITH J'ONN.

HE *LEFT* ME. *SHOT* ME WITH THAT FREAKY "*MARTIAN VISION*" OF HIS--

HE *SAVED* YOU, GYPSY.

J'ONN FLIES BY *TELEKINESIS*. HE NEEDS AN *OBJECT* OR *MASS* TO PUSH HIMSELF TOWARDS OR PULL HIMSELF AWAY FROM.

YOU WERE BOTH CAUGHT IN THE SHIP'S *INERTIA TRAIL*. J'ONN WENT FOR YOU, BUT IT WAS LIKE SWIMMING *UP* A *WATERFALL*.

HE COULD'VE USED *TELEKINESIS* TO *GRAB* ME--

NOPE.

IF J'ONN HAD GRABBED *YOU* TELEKINETICALLY, IN THE TOW OF THAT *INERTIA TRAIL*, YOU WOULD'VE BEEN *RIPPED APART*.

SINCE HE COULDN'T REACH YOU *PHYSICALLY*, HE DID THE ONLY THING HE *COULD*--

--*SHOVE* YOU OUT OF THE *INERTIA TRAIL*, AND HELP ME GET THE SHIP BACK ON-LINE SO *MY* POWERS WOULD FUNCTION.

J'ONN-- I--

NOT *NOW*, GYPSY.

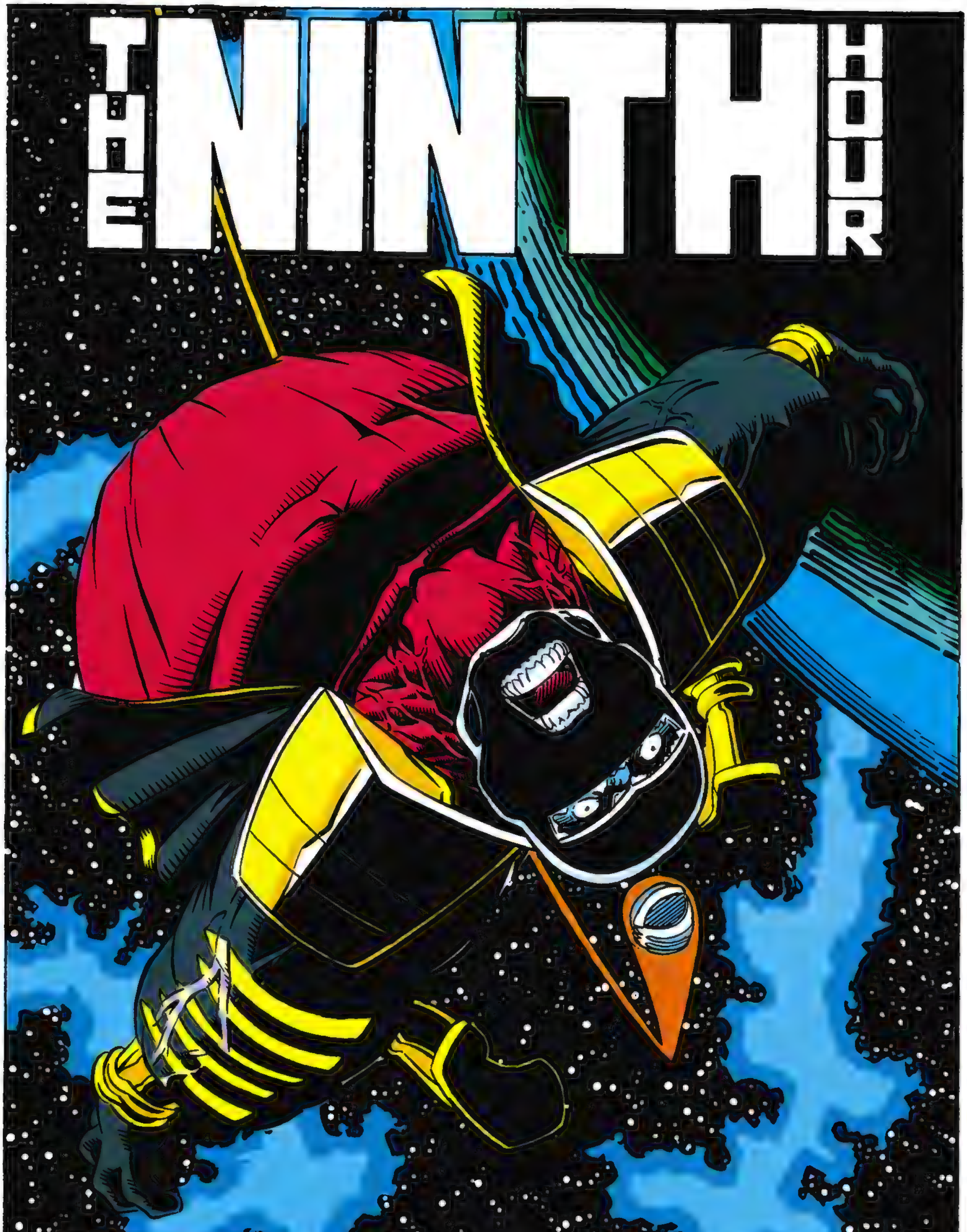
THERE IS STILL A TEAM MEMBER *MISSING*--

--AND I BELIEVE HE HAS BEEN *LOCATED*.

Oh-- GOD--

NO...

THE NINTH HOUR



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THE PLANET XANTHCAR, SITE OF INTERGALACTIC CIRCUIT COURT #A33.

FOOD.

FOOD NOW.

PANCAKE SHACK-- CLUCKY CHICKEN-- ANYTHING!

ANYTHING NOW!!

TALK! TALK!

--BUT I SURE HOPE THEY'VE GOT A BIG BELLY BURGER JOINT AROUND HERE SOMEPLACE!

Uh-oh...

OUCH.

THE ONLY HOME WE'VE GOT?

FINE, THANK YOU.

MAN--THIS--*STUFF*--YOU BREATHE--

--TAKES A LOT OF WORK --TO PUSH IT THROUGH--MY LUNGS--

MY ARMS--LIKE *LEAD*--

--MUST BE A *GRAVITY SHIFT.* ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE--*MUCH* GREATER THAN EARTH.

HI, FOLKS.

THERE A *WENDY'S* AROUND HERE SOMEPLACE--?

DIDN'T THINK SO.

STILL *NEW* AT THIS *INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL* STUFF. GOTTA REMEMBER TO PACK A *LUNCH.*

WONDER WHERE THE *TASK FORCE* IS STAYING, BET *THEY* HAVE FOOD.

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TESTIFYING FOR L-RON AT DESPERO'S TRIAL -- *WEIRD THINKING ABOUT THEM LIKE THEY'RE TWO DIFFERENT GUYS--*

--SO I GUESS THE TF ARE SOMEWHERE NEAR THE *COURTHOUSE.* NOW, WHERE MIGHT *THAT* BE... COURT-HOUSE... COURTHOUSE--

--uh-huh.

AND, AT THE COURTHOUSE...

AND, AS WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED DURING THE COURSE OF THIS TRIAL *DESPERO OF KALANOR* HAS A LONG AND SORDID HISTORY OF EVIL DOING.

A *GIFTED INTELLECTUAL*, AND FORMIDABLE *MATCH* FOR THE *CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE*--

PROSECUTION

--DESPERO NONETHELESS *LUSTED* FOR *ULTIMATE POWER*.

DARK, SORCEROUS POWERS HE GAINED FROM BATHING IN THE *FLAMES OF PY'TAR*.

AS YOU SET ABOUT YOUR DELIBERATIONS, DON'T FORGET THE *FACES* OF HIS *VICTIMS*--

PROSECUTION

YEAH-- THAT'S HIM--

--THE BIG *PURPLE GUY*. HE RIPPED MY *TENTACLES* OFF--!!

HORRIBLE. SIMPLY HORRIBLE.

HORRIBLE.

HE *RAVAGED* MY ENTIRE *COLONY*. DESTROYED *EVERYTHING*--

--HE DESERVES *DEATH*.

GENTLE BEINGS OF THE JURY, *YOU* HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A *STATEMENT*.

SEND A *MESSAGE* TO THE WOULD-BE WORLD RAVAGERS OUT THERE.

SHOW THEM *VIOLENCE* AND *DESTRUCTION*-- *MURDER* AND *MAYHEM* WILL *NOT BE TOLERATED*--

--KILL HIM!

OUTSIDE...

NO-- JUSTICE LEAGUE-- JUH-STACE- Y' KNOW-- FROM EARTH--

C'MON, SAY IT WITH ME-- JUH-STACE- LEEEG--

NO, Huh? WELL, THIS COULD GET MESSY.

I COULD JUST BLAST MY WAY IN, BUT I'M SURE J'ONN WOULD GO BALLISTIC. WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THE GOOD GUYS--

--HERE TO TESTIFY FOR OUR FRIEND--

tink! tink!

ZZZAAPP!

HEY!

FRIEND?!

YOU ARE FRIEND TO THE USURPER DESPERO--?!

WHAT'S THE FREAKING DEAL--?!

--THEN YOU SHALL DIE!!!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I GET THE MESSAGE--

--DESPERO ISN'T ON YOUR "A" LIST.

DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER.

THOOOM!

THOOOM!

THOOOM!

PROBABLY *LOSES* SOMETHING IN THE TRANSLATION.

WELL, I JUST SUPPOSE J'ONN'S GONNA HAVE TO GET *TICKED*--

--'CAUSE *NO WAY* AM I LETTING *THESE* YO-YO'S TAKE *ME* OUT!

AND, FOR THE *LAST TIME*--

--WHERE IS BURGER KING?!

GREAT.

NOW THE *RUBBER NECKS* ARE GETTING INTO IT.

VUURRAAAPPTTK

WHAT--DOES *EVERYBODY* HAVE A *GUN* HERE ?

WHAT IS THIS--THE *BRONX*--?

NUTS-- LOOKS LIKE THEY JUST SCRAGGED--

"--THE *COURTROOM.*"

KEERRRUUUNNCH!

MISTRIAL!

JUDGE-- I MOVE FOR AN IMMEDIATE--

PUT A *CORK* IN IT, JOHNNIE.

COURT OFFICERS-- FIND OUT WHAT THE *HELL'S* GOING ON OUT THERE.

GO SHOOT SOMEBODY.

WHAT THE HELL--?

THOUGHT I JUST SAW--

--OF COURSE--

SZAAAK!!

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE-- TWO XANTHIANS GO INTO A *BAR*--

HEY-- *RAY!!!*

ALL RIGHT, HOW ABOUT THE ONE ABOUT THE ANDROMEDIAN, THE XANTHIAN AND THE *NUN*--

HEY-- DID I HEAR MY--

THAT YOU *DID*, KID.

FNOOOSH!

OKAY.

JUST CHECKING.

FAST!

BACK OFF--!! HE'S MINE!!

Oh, MAN... GROSS...

YOU'RE ONE OF J'ONN'S KIDS --THE RAY, RIGHT?

YOU-- YOU SPEAK ENGLISH--?

SURE I DO. EVERYONE DOES.

BUT--NO ONE ANSWERED ME--

XANTHCANS HATE TOURISTS.

SO-- WHERE'S J'ONN?

I WAS ABOUT TO ASK YOU-- WHOEVER YOU ARE.

I'M GLENN GAMMERON. I'M A SKIP TRACER.

ME AND J'ONN GO WAY, WAY BACK--

--oh-- ISN'T THAT JUST GROOVY--!

WHAT--?

TORNADIANS!

LOOKS LIKE, SINCE YOU WERE OUT HERE MAKING A MESS--

--ALL THE SECURITY RAN OUTSIDE, LEAVING THE COURT VULNERABLE TO AN ATTACK BY THOSE FANATICS!

THEY'VE SNATCHED THE JUDGE!!

STOP THEM--!

YOU STOP 'EM. I'M GOING TO CHECK ON DESPERO.

BUT--THE JUDGE--

NOBODY'S PAYING ME *80 GRAND* TO HANG ONTO THE *JUDGE*, KID.

Oh, YEAH. *THIS* IS GOOD.

THE *LEAST* GAMMERON COULD'VE DONE WAS OFFER ME A *SNACK*.

GOTTA FIX THIS MESS BEFORE--

--HELLO.

GAMMERON.

uh--

--THAT WAY.

FEH.

TOURISTS.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR, WILL--?

I TOLD YOU--

--OUR *PARKING PERMIT.* WE CAN'T LEAVE THE SHIP HERE WITHOUT IT!

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE--?

NEVER MIND, GOT IT.

MOMENTARILY...

MAN-- THIS--THIS *AIR*--

--LIKE JELL-O-- AND THE *INCREASED GRAVITY*--MAKES ME FEEL--FEEL--

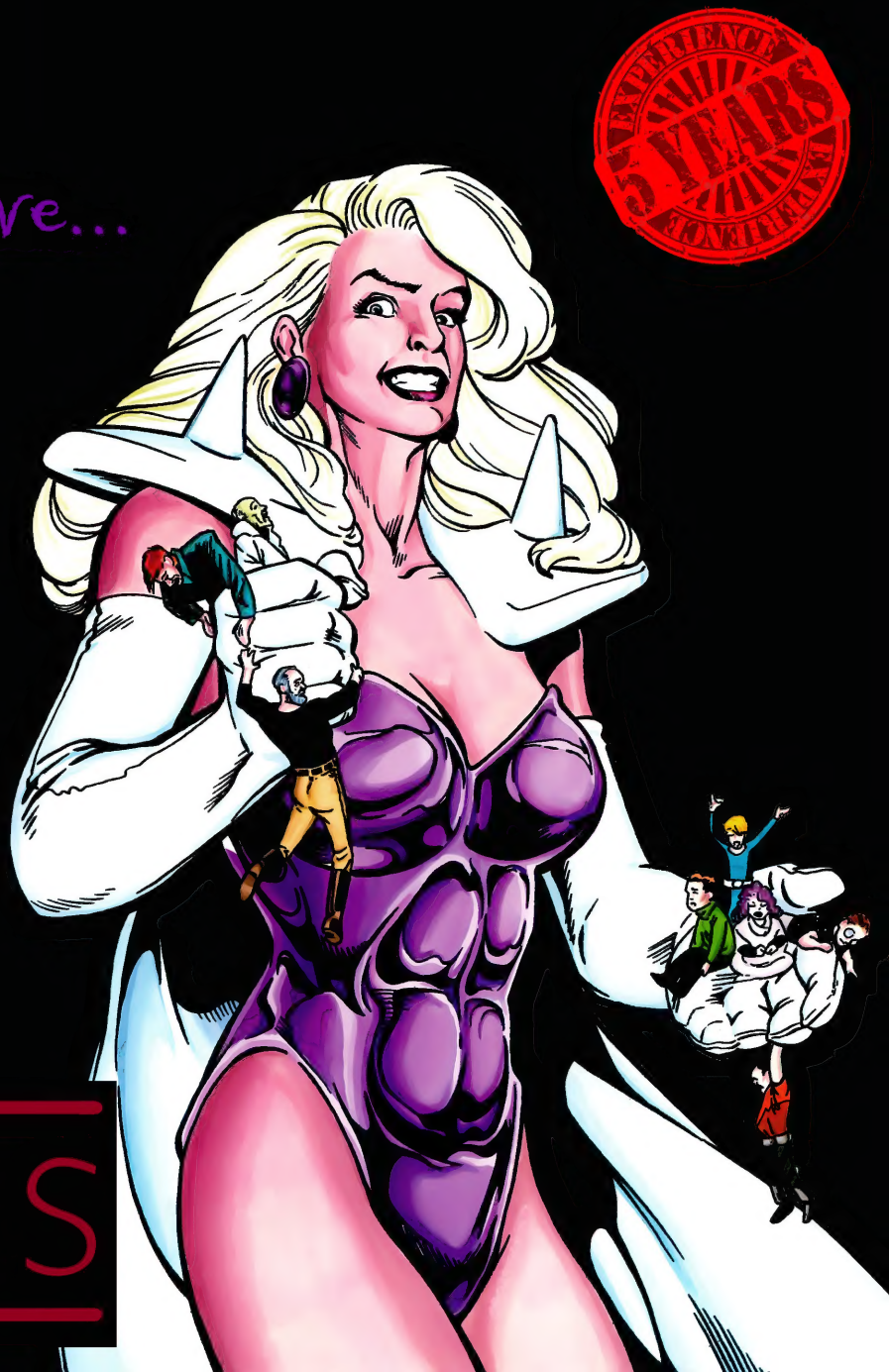
--AACCKK--!

WILL--? *TRIUMPH*--?!

--WHAT-- HAPPENED --?

NEXT: THE STAND THE VERDICT IS IN

From Baaldur, with love...



GLORITH

novus